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COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
FOR DEVELOPMENT
Fourth session
Geneva, 17 May 1999
Item 1 of the provisional agenda

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Provisional agenda

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Annotations

Item 1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

1. The provisional agenda and the documentation for the fourth session of the Commission were approved by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at its 1997 substantive session in decision 1997/306.

2. It might be recalled that, pursuant to ECOSOC resolutions 1998/46 and 1998/47, the current membership of the Commission was elected on 16 December 1998 and on 5 February 1999. At the time of the preparation of the annotated agenda, the Chairperson of the CSTD and one Vice-Chairperson from the Asian Group had not yet been elected. The following Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission for the fourth session were elected by acclamation on 22 February 1999:

Vice-Chairpersons : Mr. Bernd Michael Rode (Austria)
Mr. Arnoldo Ventura (Jamaica)
Ms. Rolanda Predecsu (Romania)

3. As at previous sessions of the Commission, one of the Vice-Chairpersons should also serve as Rapporteur.

Item 2. Substantive theme: Science and technology partnerships and networking for national capacity-building

4. The Economic and Social Council, under section E, paragraph 12, of its resolution 1997/62, decided that the main substantive theme of the Commission for its inter-sessional period 1997-1999 would be "Science and technology partnerships and networking for national capacity-building." The theme would include North-South as well as South-South partnerships and networks involving, *inter alia*, enterprises, educational bodies, research institutions, governmental science and technology departments, and other actors in the field of science and technology, with particular attention to be paid to biotechnology and energy.

Documentation

Report by the secretariat synthesizing the work of the Working Group on Science and Technology Partnerships and Networking for National Capacity-Building (E/CN.16/1999/2)

Item 3. Panel on Biotechnology

5. Under section E, paragraph 13, of its resolution 1997/62, ECOSOC also decided to hold a panel meeting on biotechnology and its impact on development. This meeting would bring together country experts and experts from relevant institutions and United Nations agencies working on that subject, in order to identify critical issues relevant to development that are not sufficiently covered by existing forums, with particular attention to food production, and in order to recommend how further work on those issues might be undertaken.

Documentation

Note by the secretariat reporting on the CSTD Panel on Biotechnology for Food Production and its Impact on Development (E/CN.16/1999/3)

Item 4. Common vision on the future of science and technology for development

6. Under Section C, paragraph 10, of its resolution 1997/62, ECOSOC recommended that the Commission, in the form of expert group meetings, carry out a programme of preparation as outlined in the report of the meeting of the preparatory working group on that subject, held on 20 and 21 December 1996 in Geneva,[1] taking into account regional inputs.

Documentation

Report by the secretariat presenting the Vision Statement of the Working Group on a Common Vision for the Future Contribution of Science and Technology for Development (E/CN.16/1999/4)

Item 5. Budget and inter-sessional activities of the Commission

7. Under Section F, paragraph 14, of its resolution 1997/62, ECOSOC recommended that at future sessions of the Commission, the report on the budget and inter-sessional activities of the Commission be considered under a separate agenda item.

Documentation

Note by the secretariat on the budget and inter-sessional activities of the Commission (E/CN.16/1999/5)

Item 6: Coalition of resources

8. Under section H, paragraph 17, of its resolution 1997/62, ECOSOC recommended that a workshop be convened by the Commission to provide a forum for the coalition of resources, particularly in relation to information and communication technologies.

Documentation

Note by the secretariat on the Workshop on Coalition of Resources (E/CN.16/1999/6)

Item 7. Action arising from the third session

9. At its third session, the Commission dealt with two main themes, namely: (i) Information and communication technologies for development;[2] and (ii) Science, technology and innovation policy reviews.[3]

10. Under Section A of its resolution 1997/62, ECOSOC recommended that all developing countries and countries with economies in transition establish a national strategy for information and communication technologies, taking

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[1] See E/CN.16/1997/CRP.2.

[2] See E/CN.16/1997/4.

[3] See E/CN.16/1997/5.

into account, *inter alia*, the guidelines proposed by the Working Group on Information and Communication Technologies for Development of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, and that where such strategies already exist, they be reviewed in the light of those guidelines.

11. The Council further recommended that action be taken by national Governments to establish a task force or commission, or to ensure that an existing entity be charged with the design of the national strategy for information and communication technologies.

12. The Council also invited countries, in order to facilitate the exchange of experience among them at the international and regional levels, to prepare a report on their strategies for information and communication technologies for the next session of the Commission, to be held in 1999, and stressed that the reports include the priorities of each national strategy, the mechanisms for updating, and the procedures for implementing the strategy and that, to enhance the value of the reports, consideration might be given to the organization of workshops, all of which should be financed from extrabudgetary resources.

13. The Council further invited relevant bodies of the United Nations system to assess their capability to provide assistance and promote cooperation in the area of information and communication technologies and to suggest areas in which they are best able to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the design and implementation of their national strategies for information and communication technologies.

14. The Council requested the secretariat of the Commission to synthesize the results of those assessments and to hold an inter-agency meeting within existing resources in cooperation with the Commission to review that synthesis.

15. The Council invited Governments, the public and business sectors, academia and non-governmental organizations in industrialized countries to engage in technological cooperation activities with their counterparts in developing countries and countries with economies in transition in order to facilitate their access to and encourage the use, production and development of information and communication technologies and to ensure their effective participation in building the global information infrastructure.

16. Finally, the Council requested the Commission to identify an independent institute to prepare a study, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, for the next session of the Commission on new forms of resource generation, focusing on information and communication technologies that might support social and economic development priorities.

17. With regard to science, technology and innovation policy reviews, the Council, under Section B, paragraphs 8 and 9, of its resolution 1997/62, decided that the Commission should organize a workshop comparing experience in science, technology and innovation policy or similar reviews in developing countries and countries with economies in transition in order to stimulate a learning process in those innovative efforts, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources.

18. The Council further recommended the continuation of cooperation between the Commission and the United Nations Conference of Trade and Development on science, technology and information policy reviews.

19. With regard to the Gender Advisory Board, the Council, under Section D, paragraph 11, of its resolution 1997/62, requested the Gender Advisory Board to continue its work as reported, in collaboration with all relevant

organizations, in particular those within the United Nations system.

Documentation

Comprehensive note on the implementation of and progress made on decisions taken at the third session, including follow-up work on information communication technologies and science, technology and innovation policy reviews (E/CN.16/1999/7)

Item 8. Role and activities of the Commission regarding the coordination of science and technology for development

20. Under section G, paragraphs 15 and 16, of its resolution 1997/62, ECOSOC decided that the secretariat of the Commission be requested to study the possibility of setting up, in collaboration with other United Nations bodies, including regional commissions, an electronic network on their activities in science and technology for development, making that network widely accessible to science and technology institutes around the world.

21. It also decided that, in order to promote better interaction with United Nations bodies, especially the regional commissions, the Commission should give consideration to including suitably qualified members of those bodies in the working groups of the Commission. In addition, meetings of the Commission's working groups might be held in the offices of the regional commissions, whenever possible.

Documentation

Note by the secretariat on the role and activities of the Commission regarding the coordination of science and technology for development (E/CN.16/1999/8)

Item 9. Election of the Chairperson and other officers for the fifth session of the Commission

22. The Commission may wish to follow the practice adopted at its previous sessions of electing a Chairperson and four Vice-Chairpersons for its fifth session. It is understood that one of the Vice-Chairpersons would also serve as Rapporteur.

Item 10. Provisional agenda and organization of work of the fifth session of the Commission

23. The Commission will have before it a note by the secretariat on the provisional agenda for its fifth session, the documents to be submitted under each item and the organization of its work.

Item 11. Other matters

Item 12. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its fourth session

24. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/235 and Economic and Social Council decision 1992/218, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development submits its report to the Council.